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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL
PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES
PAAWG 2021-01

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) met on February 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, only the Chair of PAAWG and Regional staff were in attendance at the Peel Conference Centre, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite B, Brampton, Ontario. Others participated in the meeting via Microsoft Teams.

Members Present: Gary Mountain, Chair, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Brian Wannamaker, Citizen-at-Large
Ed Russell, Peel Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Manjari Mehta, Citizen-at-Large
Kristen Carberry, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Tom Dolson, Peel Federation of Agriculture
Jennifer Innis, Regional Councillor
Michael Palleschi, Regional Councillor
Paul Risebrough, Citizen-at-Large

Members Absent: Stephen Dasko, Regional Councillor
Merissa Nudelman, Ecosource

Staff: Mark Head, Manager, Research and Analysis, Region of Peel
Don Campbell, Principal Planner, Region of Peel
Marco Di Nizio, Junior Planner, Region of Peel
Raluca Vana, Council and Community Relations Officer, Region of Peel
Mark Eastman, Senior Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation
Holly Shipclark, Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach, Credit Valley Conservation
Nadine Abrams, Rural Clean Water Program Coordinator, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Ben Roberts, Economic Development Officer, Town of Caledon

Guests: No guests identified for this meeting.

1) Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Mark Head.

2) Annual Election/Reappointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Mark Head advised that the PAAWG Terms of Reference require that the Chair and Vice-Chair be elected at the first meeting annually to serve for the remainder of the calendar year. They may be re-appointed for subsequent years. Mr. Head then described the voting procedure for election of the Chair and Vice-Chair and called for nominations.

Moved by Ed Russell.

Nominated Gary Mountain for Chair and Karen Hutchinson for Vice Chair. No other nominations were made and no oppositions were voiced.

Carried PAAWG 2021-01

3) Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Gary Mountain reviewed the updated procedures for virtual meetings.

4) Review and Approval of February 18, 2021 Agenda

Moved by Ed Russell
Seconded by Tom Dolson

That the agenda for the February 18, 2021 meeting of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2021-02

5) Review and Approval of Minutes from November 2020 Meeting

Moved by Ed Russell

That the Minutes of Meeting 2020-04 of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group, held on November 19, 2020, be approved.

Carried PAAWG 2021-03

6) Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) Action Plan Update
Don Campbell, Region of Peel

Don Campbell explained that this item is a follow up to the presentation on the Action Plan at the November 18, 2020 PAAWG meeting. He highlighted two major questions to be addressed by PAAWG:

1. What priorities can be achieved from the Goals of the GHFFA Action Plan? and
2. What is of most significance for agricultural planning in Peel?

Mr. Campbell went on to describe each Goal and the actions that follow the pertaining Goals. The Goals include:

1. The GHFFA is recognized as the leading organization with expertise on food and farming issues and opportunities in the Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario.
2. Establish the Golden Horseshoe as Canada's leading innovative agriculture and agri-food cluster.
3. Enable the agri-food cluster to support sustainability outcomes.

Mr. Campbell also described the actions and sub-actions related to each goal. He then invited feedback on which actions or sub-actions are relevant to Peel.

Questions/Discussion

Tom Dolson wondered whether Peel has had a commitment regarding local municipal support of the GHFFA actions. Mark Head indicated that Regional Council resolutions supported the funding to the GHFFA. Mark Head added that the GHFFA only has single and upper-tier municipalities as members, whose commitments are expressed through Council resolutions. Peel also structured its commitment in a Memorandum of Understanding.

Gary Mountain observed that Peel is affected by federal government trade policies which hinder the farm economy. Don Campbell noted that federal responsibilities are touched upon in the GHFFA Action Plan Goals.

Gary Mountain commented that it is a challenge for farmers to provide housing for workers such as putting a trailer on a property with a coinciding high development fee. The cost of this process takes away from affordable housing and creates difficulties for farm owners. Mr. Mountain suggested that this need to be addressed more in-depth.

Tom Dolson referred to Goal C.3.3 and mentioned that Peel's agricultural partners need to contribute to climate initiatives but realistically there is very little in terms of compensation for the landowners of farms. Ed Russell added that there needs to be compensation for farmers when they adapt to climate change. Gary Mountain added that, if farmers were compensated for keeping forest, cover, that would be a viable route for compensation. He added that carbon

taxes create issues for farmers. Tom Dolson noted that the Peel Rural Water Quality Program is a good example of supporting farmers for environmental stewardship.

Mark Head commented that Goals C.3.2 and C.3.3. appear to have been written with Peel in mind. He indicated that staff would like to take PAAWG's comments back to the GHFFA to see if any incentive programs can be developed. Peel Region would like to work with Town of Caledon to share any ideas. Ben Roberts added that building relationships and collaboration with different organizations is important.

7) Draft PAAWG Work Plan for 2021

Don Campbell, Region of Peel

Don Campbell reported that the 2021 Work Plan updates the previous Work Plan from 2019 when the past membership was appointed. Additional Work Plan project categories include: Policy, Research and Development, and Monitoring; Peel Rural Water Quality Program and the Peel ALUS Pilot Project; Support Agri-Food & Agri-Business Opportunities; Regional Projects & Initiatives and Communication & Outreach. The current priorities of the Work Plan have been focused on policy research and development to support the Peel 2041+ Regional Official Plan Review although several other projects are also advancing including work on the Peel ALUS Canada Pilot. The Work Plan envisions that the Peel ALUS pilot project will be brought to Regional Council for endorsement in 2021.

Questions/Discussion

Tom Dolson noted that the Peel 2041+ Official Plan Review seems to envision that farming will need to co-exist adjacent to urban expansion. In order for farming to continue, consideration should be given to locating lower density urban uses adjacent to farming operations. Brian Wannamaker noted that protection of prime agricultural lands is key and that the opposition to new highways is crucial for protection.

8) Peel 2041+ Official Plan Review

Mark Head, Region of Peel

Mark Head provided an update on the Peel 2041+ Official Plan Review and the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). The deadline for Provincial approval is in July 2022. Region of Peel Planning Staff intend to bring a staff report and draft Regional Official Plan Amendment to Council potentially in summer of 2021. Statutory public statutory consultation and an open house will be held later in 2021 prior to Council considering adoption.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABE) Update

Mr. Head explained that the SABE process currently is in Phase C, which is the phase that will develop draft policies and mapping for the settlement expansion. The Region retained Planscape to address the agricultural components and prepare an agricultural impact assessment (AIA). Mark gave an overview of the mapping and SABE work that had been previously presented at PAAWG and noted that PAAWG will be provided with a presentation on the next stage of the AIA study at a future meeting when detailed analysis of the SABE was available.

Questions/Discussion

Gary Mountain mentioned that other counties and regions are carrying out official plan reviews within the same timeline. Mark confirmed that there is no amendment to the timeline and that the work plan is proceeding to provide a recommendation to Regional Council to meet the Provincial conformity deadline in 2022.

Tom Dolson asked whether the Official Plan Review is predicated on the GTA West corridor. Mark Head responded that the current SABE utilizes provincial information on the GTA West corridor.

Tom Dolson asked how long it will be before the urban boundary established through this OP Review can be amended. Mark Head replied that boundary adjustments could be considered in the next five-year review of the Region's Official Plan.

Councillor Innis added that, whether or not the GTA West corridor goes ahead, a transportation corridor will be needed. It may be a rail or transit corridor.

9) Grown in Peel Update

Marco Di Nizio, Junior Planner and Co-chair of Grown in Peel, Region of Peel

Mr. Di Nizio explained that the Grown in Peel guide is a local food marketing and promotion initiative to promote local agriculture, connect residents to the farmers who produce their food, and increase residents' access to safe, healthy and affordable food in Peel Region. Grown in Peel did not proceed with printing of a paper guide for 2020 as the initiative was paused in March 2020 due to COVID-19. A notice was sent to Councillors that explained the pause due to COVID-19.

Mr. Di Nizio suggested ideas Peel staff can consider in relaunching the initiative. These include: transition from the paper guide to an online web map only; consulting with participating farms and farmers' markets and local municipal staff; transitioning the guide to a phone application; and including staff from other Regional divisions or departments in producing the Guide.

Mr. Di Nizio noted that the guide is still paused. The main challenge lies with the availability of Public Health staff who co-manage the initiative as they have been redeployed to assist with the Region's COVID-19 response.

Questions/Discussion

No questions were identified.

10) Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP)

Mark Eastman, Credit Valley Conservation

Holly Shipclark, Credit Valley Conservation

Nadine Abrams, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

1. 2020 Status Report

Mark Eastman reported that 2020 was an average year, with 12 PRWQP projects approved and PRWQP grants of \$95,000. Over the program's history 78 individual farm businesses have been engaged. Over \$1 million in grants have been made to 204 projects which have leveraged over \$3 million. Mr. Eastman observed that this outcome displays the long-term sustained effectiveness of the program. It is a good example of how small projects over time produce large results. He thanked the Region and PAAWG for their support.

Questions/Discussion

Brian Wannamaker suggested that the return on investment should be discussed. Mark Eastman indicated that Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) staff are undertaking such an analysis and expect to include it in future reports. Mr. Eastman added that CVC is close to reporting on carbon and stormwater values within ongoing and future projects.

2. Financial Update

Mark Eastman had had \$112,000 in funding available in 2020 consisting of \$75,000 in program funding and \$37,000 in additional contributions from TRCA. Grant payments totalling \$94,922.37 were approved. The remaining unallocated funds, in the amount of \$17,153.01, can not be carried forward to 2021. The income available for 2021 projects is \$75,000. TRCA may contribute additional funds to the program.

Questions/Discussion

A question was asked about where the \$17,000 balance remaining at year end is allocated. Mr. Eastman said that this will be considered at a meeting of the CVC Board of Directors.

3. PRWQP Projects

01-CVC-21 Cover Crops

Holly Shipclark indicated that this application involves the planting of a 35 acre field in cover crops on a 195 acre cash crop farm. The project will help protect and improve soils and reduce water runoff and sediment/nutrient loss into the adjacent watercourse. She noted that the applicant does not have an Environmental Farm Plan.

Questions/Discussion

No questions were raised.

Moved by Ed Russell

That application 01-CVC-21 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$3,500 under the category "Cover Crops" conditional on the applicant's completion of an Environmental Farm Plan for the.

Carried PAAWG 2021-04

02-CVC-21 Tree Planting

Holly Shipclark explained that this application would support the planting of 1.9 hectares in a sensitive, wet area on a 191 acre mixed farm. The site is located in a Wellhead Protection Area and adjacent to natural heritage features. The project would protect a vulnerable aquifer, protect soils, enhance the natural heritage system and protect water resources.

Questions/Discussion

No questions were raised.

Moved by Paul Risebrough

That application 02-CVC-21 be approved and that funding be provided in the amount of \$1,238.61 under the category "Tree Planting".

Carried PAAWG 2021-05

11)Brampton Stormwater Charge By-law

Don Campbell and Mark Head, Region of Peel

Mark Head reported that Regional staff had gathered information on by-laws in other municipalities and had met with City of Brampton staff to discuss the City's stormwater charges by-law. The charges are used to finance operation maintenance, renewal, and rehabilitation of the City's stormwater infrastructure. Mr. Head noted that stormwater charges are calculated based on the amount of impervious area of a property. A stormwater charge estimator available on Brampton's website can be used to estimate the charges for a property and get an indication of how they are calculated. The City by-law allows for exemptions and credits that a landowner can apply for.

Questions/Discussion

Tom Dolson noted that Mississauga's stormwater by-law exempts farm business registrants. It is disingenuous to promote agricultural development and then impose such a high cost for farmers. Farmers face stormwater charges in excess of their annual property taxes. Farmers plan to make a delegation to Brampton City Council.

Councillor Palleschi indicated that the City has been able to help a number of landowners facing problems.

Mark Head confirmed that Mississauga has stormwater charges. Regional staff found that three municipalities in Ontario provide exemptions to agricultural property and Mississauga is one of them.

Tom Dolson asked that more information be forwarded to him regarding stormwater charges and thanked councillor Palleschi for his comments. Gary Mountain inquired if there will be a set stormwater charge Region-wide.

Mark Eastman noted that he has been anticipating calls for PRWQP regarding stormwater charges. He indicated that he is looking for resources to respond to inquiries. Councillor Palleschi responded that additional information can be attained from him or City staff.

12) ALUS PEEL Pilot Project

Don Campbell, Region of Peel

Mr. Campbell reported that Region of Peel and Conservation Authority staff have been working with ALUS and plans for the project are moving forward. He anticipated a report or update to be provided at the May 2020 PAAWG meeting.

Questions/Discussion

No questions identified

13) Peel Food Action Plan - Update

Karen Hutchinson, PAAWG Representative on the Peel Food Action Council

Karen Hutchinson was not present when this agenda item was raised. Gary Mountain suggested that this item be rescheduled to a future meeting.

14) Communication and Information Items

The following items were attached to the agenda for information.

[OFA Consolidated Agricultural Land Use Policy | Ontario Federation of Agriculture](#)

[GHFFA Letter to Province re: Impact of Bill 229 \(changes to the Conservation Authorities Act\)](#)

["OFA urges farmland preservation to maintain demand for locally sourced food". OFA Viewpoint, Jan. 11, 2021.](#)

[OFA believes conservation authorities have vital role in working to protect our land and water resources.](#) OFA News Release, December 7, 2020.

[Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020: Protecting Ontario Farms and the Food System.](#) OFA News Release, December 4, 2020.

[2021 Farmland Forum: The Shifting Landscapes of Farmland Protection.](#) Ontario Farmland Trust, March 25, 2021.

15) Adjournment

Moved by Ed Russell

That the February 18, 2021 Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting be adjourned.

Carried PAAWG 2021-06

The meeting stood adjourned at 9:14 pm.

The next Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group meeting will be held on May 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.